

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on April 18, 2019:

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: George O. (Buster) Steere, Jr., President; William E. Reichert; Patricia Henry; and Julian (Jay) Forgue.

Member Absent: Walter M. O. Steere, III, Vice-President

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Tim Kane, Town Solicitor; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police; Kenneth Johnson, Building/Zoning Official; Karen Scott, Town Planner; Jane Steere, Tax Collector; Lori DeSantis, Tax Assessor; and Gerald Mosca, EMA Director.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

None.

V. Proclamations:

A. Earth Day - April 22, 2019

Councilor G. Steere stated that we have a Town proclamation in celebration of Earth Day, which was read into the record by Councilor Henry:

**Proclamation of the Town of Gloucester  
#2019-01 Earth Day**

**WHEREAS,** The Town of Gloucester recognizes that the First Earth Day in 1970 was the beginning of the modern environmental movement which helped shape the values and priorities of an entire generation. As a result of citizen demand, Congress passed the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, as well as superfund legislation thereby putting a lasting framework for our future in place; and

**WHEREAS,** Rhode Islanders, and Gloucester residents in particular, have demonstrated leadership in environmental action and awareness, and expect sound environmental action from their leaders; and

**WHEREAS,** in observation of Earth Day, April 22nd, the Town of Gloucester has events planned to clean up and beautify our town as follows: the Town Council along with our Conservation Commission, Public Works Department, the Sand Dam Lake Association & the Gloucester Business Association has planned the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Earth Day Celebration Clean-Up on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, working in four areas of our Town to clean up litter; our Conservation Commission will: continue the

clean-up and maintenance of the historic Gloucester Town Pound (located near the Gloucester Police Station), continue the restoration of historic cemeteries in town, provide landscape work at the Gloucester Senior Center, and will again hold their annual distribution of approx. 1000 tree seedlings to Gloucester residents at no charge; and

**WHEREAS,** The Town Council supports activities celebrating Earth Day in Gloucester, statewide, nationally, and on a global level, and we encourage our youth and adults alike to take a pledge to help to keep our earth “Clean and Green”; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED;** that the Town Council and Town Clerk encourage Gloucester residents to participate in neighborhood clean-ups and support the Town’s efforts as we contribute to the celebration of Earth Day.

George O. Steere, Jr.  
Town Council President

Jean M Fecteau, CMC, Town Clerk

Dated this 18th day of April 2019

seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: Councilor Henry complimented Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, on the writing of the proclamation.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

**B. Arbor Day - April 27, 2019**

Councilor G. Steere stated that we also have a Town proclamation for the celebration of Arbor Day. Councilor Reichert read the following into the record:

**Proclamation of the Town of Gloucester  
#2019-02 Arbor Day**

**WHEREAS,** In 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees. This holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska and is now observed throughout the nation and the world; and

**WHEREAS,** Trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, clean the air, produce oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife. Trees are also a renewable resource of wood for our homes and fuel for our fires. Trees in our Town enhance our property, beautify our community, and are a source of joy and spiritual renewal; and

**WHEREAS,** In observation of Arbor Day, April 26th, the Conservation Commission will hold its *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Tree Giveaway, on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>*, where approx. 1000 tree seedlings, including American Plum, Eastern Redbud, Spicebush and Serbian Spruce will be distributed free of charge to Glocester residents; and

**WHEREAS,** There are many events planned statewide for the celebration of Earth Day and Arbor Day that will help promote and teach our families the value of preserving our environment while providing a fun family experience; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED;** That the Town Council and Town Clerk of the Town of Glocester do hereby proclaim our commitment to Arbor Day on April 26, 2019 in the Town of Glocester, and urge all citizens to celebrate by supporting efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, and we urge all citizens to plant trees and promote this celebration of nature for future generations.

George O. Steere, Jr.  
Town Council President

Jean M. Fecteau, CMC, Town Clerk

Dated this 18th day of April 2019

seconded by Councilor Forgue.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:           AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
                  NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Citations

A. Harmony Fire - 2019 Years of Service Awards

Councilor G. Steere stated that each year the Harmony Fire District presents awards for years of service to its members. Councilor G. Steere noted that the awards will be presented at their annual banquet to be held on April 20, 2019. Councilor G. Steere stated that this year the fire district has chosen three members to award, as follows:

The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
Town of Glocester  
**Citation #2019-04**

Be it hereby known to all that:

The Town of Glocester  
hereby offers its sincerest congratulations to:

Chief Richard A. Waterman  
for 5 Years of Service to the Harmony Fire Department

Lieutenant George H. Nichols III  
for 10 Years of Service to the Harmony Fire Department

Private Amy Bettencourt  
for 5 Years of Service to the Harmony Fire Department

Given in recognition of your dedication to your Fire Company and our community when called to serve those in need.

Proposed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2019 by:

George O. Steere, Jr.  
President, Town Council

Jean M. Fecteau, CMC,  
Town Clerk

seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Harmony Fire - Extraordinary Service Awards  
Councilor G. Steere stated that recently Harmony Fire was dispatched to a serious situation call and noted that their efforts saved a life that day. Councilor G. Steere stated that those members will be awarded at a ceremony on May 4, 2019. Councilor Reichert read the following Citation into the record:

The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
Town of Glocester  
**Citation #2019-05**

Be it hereby known to all that:  
The Town of Glocester  
hereby offers it sincerest congratulations to:

Captain Justin Lema  
Lieutenant George Nichols  
Private Russell Dixon  
Private Nathan Wuorio  
Private Michael Sears

In recognition of:

Their excellence and professionalism during an extremely serious and lifesaving call while serving the Harmony Fire Department.

We thank you for your dedication and we proudly acknowledge your service to our community on behalf of the Town Council, the Town Clerk, and the residents of Gloucester.

Proposed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2019 by:

George O. Steere, Jr.  
President, Town Council

Jean M. Fecteau, CMC,  
Town Clerk

seconded by Councilor Forgue.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VII. Consent Items - Discussion and/or Action

- A. Approval of Town Council Regular meeting minutes of April 4, 2019
- B. Tax Assessor's Additions and Abatements - March 2019
- C. Finance Director's Monthly Report - March 2019

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to APPROVE the Town Council Regular meeting minutes of April 4, 2019; to APPROVE the ABATEMENTS to the 2018 Tax Roll in the amount of \$38.89; No ADDITIONS to the 2018 Tax Roll; and to ACCEPT the Finance Directors Report for March 2019; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VIII. Unfinished Business

- A. Board and Commissions
  - 1. Appointments:
    - a. Recreation Commission - Discussion and/or Action  
Two year term to expire 1/2021

Councilor Henry stated that the Recreation Commission has not met and she has contacted the Recreation Director but has not heard back. Councilor Henry noted that the Commission has received two (2) Talent Bank forms and hopefully we can make the appointment in May.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to TABLE the appointment to the Recreation Commission for a term to expire 1/2021; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

## MOTION PASSED

### IX. New Business

A. Taxation: Senior Tax Exemption (Process & Procedures) Discussion and/or Action  
Councilor W. Reichert stated that he has been receiving calls regarding the process to file for the Senior Tax Exemption. Councilor W. Reichert stated people have complained about what is required at renewal. Councilor W. Reichert stated he has had numerous questions. Councilor W. Reichert stated that in the past some people that missed the deadline were excused and some weren't. Councilor Reichert asked Lori DeSantis, Tax Assessor, to provide an explanation regarding the process of renewal for the exemption.

Lori DeSantis, Tax Assessor, explained that she sends the taxpayers a form and asks them to come in with their license and the form. Councilor Reichert asked how often is this done. L. DeSantis replied that it has always been once a year in Glocester, but we used to allow mail-ins and people would mail them in from Florida without a Rhode Island license. L. DeSantis stated that some people were not living in Glocester but were getting the exemption of \$2,000. Councilor G. Steere commented that in Florida, they have a Homestead Exemption so with a Florida license, they are getting that as well.

Councilor Reichert stated that it is great that the Assessor is doing that, but it is an inconvenience for some, especially the elderly. Councilor Reichert stated that we have exempted some but not others and that is unfair.

L. DeSantis stated that regarding the elderly, if they can't make it here, she does home visits to make sure they are still living there because it is supposed to be owner/occupied. Councilor Reichert stated that people sometimes forget. L. DeSantis stated that she sends two (2) forms, and certifies a third one if they do not respond. L. DeSantis noted that out of four (4) that she sent last week, three (3) were not living there, they were in assisted living.

Councilor Reichert stated that many of the calls he has received have been from new people who objected to having to go home to get their license.

Councilor Henry asked what is the total amount of actual loss of revenue to the Town due to the exemption. L. DeSantis replied it is a little over two (2) million dollars. Councilor Henry stated that it is two (2) million dollars that we are allowing out of the concept that we want the elderly to be able to remain in their homes. Councilor Henry stated that L. DeSantis feels that it needs to be verified and if there are a few incidences where people are housebound, they can come to the Council for an appeal. Councilor W. Reichert acknowledged that L. DeSantis is doing her job. Councilor Henry stated that last year, the Council was very rigid regarding appeals and maybe we need to look at that and consider those that are legitimate. Councilor W. Reichert stated he is looking for fairness when appeals are made. Councilor Henry stated that she firmly believes that for that kind of exemption, it is not asking too much for the taxpayer to have to come in.

Councilor Reichert stated that the exemption was put into place for people who have lived in Town for 40, 50 or 60 years and have paid taxes for that long. Councilor Reichert stated that it is well deserved. Councilor Reichert expressed his opinion that if somebody "knows somebody" they can get it when there is a late filing. Councilor G. Steere disagreed, stating that the day after the

deadline, Elaine Woodlock came in to file her elderly exemption. Councilor G. Steere told her she had missed the deadline and, in fact, she was denied because it was late. Councilor G. Steere noted that E. Woodlock has missed the exemption for seven (7) years as she is 72 years old and this was the first time she has come in to file.

Councilor Henry agreed with Councilor W. Reichert that the Council has been extremely rigid in the appeal process and feels that this is something that could be improved upon. Councilor Henry stated that the concept that you have to verify is important. L. DeSantis stated that we have to be fair to everyone and if we allow somebody to miss a deadline, we shouldn't have a deadline. L. DeSantis stated that the taxpayer has to be 65 by 12/31 but we give them until the following March. Councilor Henry commented that she has been getting the exemption for a couple of years and she is grateful and does not consider it an inconvenience to come in to fill out the paperwork. L. DeSantis commented that some people get \$4,000 or \$5,000 off, and stated that most of the towns in Rhode Island don't have the exemption.

Councilor Henry stated that since she has been on the Council, if somebody misses the deadline and it is a hardship, they come before the Council. Councilor Henry suggested that the Council evaluate the situations case by case. Councilor Reichert stated that some got passed and others did not. Councilor G. Steere stated that he only remembers one, where the taxpayer was in Florida for the winter. Councilor W. Reichert stated it was a Councilor's neighbor. Councilor G. Steere commented that the Council feels bad when we don't allow it, but that is the way it is.

Councilor Forgue stated that most people get the Bargain Buyer and suggested that the Council put an ad in regarding the elderly exemption. Councilor Henry stated that she thinks we did that in the past, but not this year. L. DeSantis stated that she called 10 of the people after she certified the letters. Councilor Henry stated that L. DeSantis has gone above and beyond. Councilor W. Reichert stated he has spend hours on the phone from our residents this year. Councilor W. Reichert stated L. DeSantis is doing a good job but asked her to send him a list of the people who haven't turned in their forms.

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to continue to advertise in the Bargain Buyer to forecast to the taxpayers that the Elderly Exemption is coming up and needs to be signed; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor Reichert asked L. DeSantis to send him a list of those who haven't replied and he will stop by their house. Councilor W. Reichert stated he has never received so many phone calls from angry residents.

- B. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Revision - Farm Accessory Uses  
Planning Board request & advisory opinion - Discussion and/or Action

Karen Scott, Town Planner, stated that the Planning Board has sent an advisory opinion to the Town Council with regard to a revision to the Zoning Ordinance which they have been working on for some time. K. Scott explained that the purpose is to expand the accessory uses that are allowed on farm land to give an economic incentive to people to hold onto their agricultural operations, keep the rural character and stop the development of house lots. K. Scott noted that there are some limitations depending on the size of the farm. K. Scott pointed out that it does not limit any of the agricultural activities that are currently allowed so no rights have been taken away from anyone. K. Scott stated that if the Council wishes to move forward with a first reading, she will be prepared to give a much more detailed outline. K. Scott stated that if the Council has any specific questions, she would be happy to answer them.

Councilor Forgue asked if somebody would be allowed to have a wedding on their farm without having to get a special permit. K. Scott replied that after discussion at a Planning Board workshop, where farmers and residents were invited to participate in the conversation, it was decided not to include weddings at this time with the potential to add it later. K. Scott stated that one of the uses in the revision is a farm café, a small restaurant-type facility where you could serve or make things that you've grown. K. Scott stated that one of the more popular ones discussed by the Planning Board was winery/brewery/distillery.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Planning Board put a lot of work into this with the assistance of Scott Millar from Statewide Planning. Regarding weddings, Councilor G. Steere noted that they have been troublesome in other towns. Councilor G. Steere stated that a lot of time and thought was put into this.

Councilor Henry questioned page 4, Product Stand, which says "a rustic freestanding structure or vehicle located upon a farm", asking why the adjective "rustic" is used. Councilor Henry stated that it is subjective, not objective. K. Scott agreed and stated that she will delete the word.

Councilor Reichert spoke regarding Farm Based Contracting Business and stated that there are no DEM regulations on trucks. Councilor Reichert commented that this is why people use old oil trucks for storage of machinery and equipment. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that he will take a look at it. Councilor Reichert stated that some farmers use oil trucks on site to fuel other equipment because there are many restrictions on underground tanks. T. Kane stated that a sentence could be inserted to indicate that this would not prohibit a working farm from having an oil truck, or similar type truck, to use to provide fuel as a fuel source for the farm operation.

Councilor G. Steere stated that if we set the first reading and have a public hearing, we could make still make changes to it.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to SET a first reading, for May 2, 2019, to introduce the proposed amendments to the Code of Ordinance, Chapter 350, Zoning, Article 1, Section 350-5 Definitions, Section 350-58.2 Farm Accessory Uses & Attachment 1, Table of Use Regulations; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue

NAYS-0  
MOTION PASSED

X. Town Council Correspondence and/or Discussion

- A. Councilor Forge stated that as liaison to Personnel, he has had a few conversations where salary adjustments and raises have been key issues with employees. Councilor Forge stated that while it is hard to question what occurred in the past or cast opinions on something when you were not part of the decision making process back then, it is clear that we must do everything to keep things transparent and fair.

Councilor Forge stated that one issue he keeps hearing about that appears to already have and could continue to create misconceptions or animosity between employees is the practice of hiring employees at one annual salary with the promise that a year later there will an additional bump up in salary, in addition to the annual raise all others receive. Councilor Forge stated it seems that, in the private sector, that well might work well to enhance qualified employees to the workforce, but in a municipal setting, it may not be beneficial. Councilor Forge commented that if there is a target number set for a position, that is what the number should be, and we should say what it is. Councilor Forge stated that this method of compensation could give the wrong impression to our taxpayers as it may not appear clear and straightforward. Councilor Forge again stated that in a municipality, an annual salary should be the annual salary. Councilor Forge stated that if it has been done to save a little money, that is appreciated but again, in the long run he feels that it is not worth the potential confusion. Councilor Forge stated that going forward, he would either ask this Council to consider this issue when hiring or if we feel strongly enough, we could find a way to incorporate it into our employee handbook when a revision is done. Councilor Forge stated that if the Council members want him to elaborate, he would be more than happy to.

Councilor G. Steere stated that this is Open Forum and asked if he can make comments since it is not on the agenda. T. Kane replied noted that we are in Council Correspondence and comments can be made, and if the Council wishes to take action, they can place it on a future agenda. T. Kane stated that Councilor Forge is a constituent and a taxpayer.

Councilor G. Steere stated that he knows what Councilor Forge is referring to and we did just hire somebody. Councilor G. Steere stated that it is not necessarily to save money and noted that the clerks had been hired that way where they would step up over two (2) years' time to the full pay. Councilor G. Steere commented that as a taxpayer, he would be grateful that we are hiring a new person at a lesser rate the first year while training. Councilor G. Steere stated that he gets what Councilor Forge is saying, but people misconstrue it as a raise or a handout after being here a year if they perform up to par. Councilor G. Steere stated it depends on how you look at it.

Councilor Forge stated that he was under the impression that the "bump" was in case the person did not work out, we could save the Town some money, but what we are

trying to do or say is confusing to not only a taxpayer, but other people that work for the Town. Councilor Forgue stated other employees comment on this practice. Councilor Forgue further stated that in the private sector, this type of thing is done in private, but everything we do is in public and can be misconstrued very easily, causing complications.

Councilor G. Steere stated that people should get the answer from the “horse’s mouth” but he agreed that it can be misconstrued. Councilor G. Steere stated that there isn’t anything that has not been transparent. Councilor G. Steere further stated that the clerks got that negotiated out of their contract and he believes that there is no longer a “learning period”; they get hired at the full rate. Councilor Forgue questioned whether it is a “learning period” or how long they stay, or if they fulfill their obligation for a year.

Councilor G. Steere stated I think it is a learning experience and if they fulfill the shoes.

Councilor Reichert stated that if it is included, it should be written somewhere so it is clearly spelled out. Regarding the clerks, Councilor Reichert asked if we skip steps or if the steps are gone now. Councilor G. Steere replied that there are no more steps, and welcomed anyone to correct him if he is wrong, and when a clerk is hired they start at that rate, period.

D. Brennan, Finance Director, stated that the jobs the Council is speaking about fall outside of the realm of a contract or within the unit of the DPW. D. Brennan stated that with regard to the DPW, it takes two (2) years to get to the first level, and every six (6) months, a new hire gets a raise. D. Brennan stated that for the clerks, it would take them two (2) years to get to that. D. Brennan further stated that the Police and dispatchers also have different levels of steps, but people who are outside of that start where they start and they never change.

D. Brennan stated that the last time, she came to the Council to say that she wanted to widen the net by bringing the job down to a lower category than it had been in the past. D. Brennan stated that the person that received the job was at lower rate than had been advertised for the last three (3) people. D. Brennan noted that the employee came in with more experience than the first person, who was making \$3,000 more. D. Brennan stated that she felt it was appropriate for the employee to come in at the top of the salary that was advertised, as well as to bring her close to where she probably would have been had she first applied for the job when it was first advertised. D. Brennan stated it is to liken those areas that don’t have steps.

Councilor Forgue stated that he has been asked by several people who seem upset about the amount of the bump because they feel it is unfair to them. Councilor Forgue stated that he is trying to eliminate that process. Councilor Forgue stated his opinion that if someone is hired at, for example \$55,000 a year, after a year they get a percentage across the board. Councilor Forgue stated that when you use big numbers, that is what sits in people’s heads. D. Brennan stated that it is probably less

than a dollar an hour. Councilor Forgue stated that this is his feeling, whether the Council wants to adopt it or not. Councilor Forgue stated that he has said what he had to say and he feels good that he did. D. Brennan replied “so noted” and stated that she does not take offense with what Councilor Forgue is saying, but at the same time she knows that there are some areas that it seems appropriate for a job in her office. D. Brennan pointed out that she in on the fourth person, adding that all three (3) of them have all gone somewhere else, and part of their reason for going was for compensation.

Councilor Forgue asked when the new person will be coming in. D. Brennan replied that she will start in May. Councilor Forgue stated that everybody knows that we have a new budget coming out and most employees will be getting a bump, but the conception is that this person will not only be getting “X” amount of dollars in a raise, she will also get the percentage in the budget as well. D. Brennan replied that it will be a year later. Councilor Forgue questioned even if she is hired before the budget comes out, will she get the 3% when the new budget comes out. D. Brennan replied that the person does not get the raise until a whole year is completed. D. Brennan stated they wouldn’t start in May and get the \$2,500 in July.

Councilor Forgue stated his opinion that it is confusing and here we are struggling with why we do it. Councilor Forgue stated that he does not see a big savings there for the aggravation and conception that goes along with it. Councilor Forgue stated that he does not see where it is really worth it. D. Brennan stated that it was never proposed as a way of saving, but was proposed as a way to retain. D. Brennan further stated that the biggest problem we have in the Town of Glocester is to be able to retain. Councilor Forgue replied that his theory is that if we want to retain, put the hook in and give them what the job should pay. Councilor Forgue stated that he is trying to eliminate some chatter and for the people who don’t come to the meetings and hear these things. Councilor Forgue stated that if it could be simplified, he likes simplified. D. Brennan agreed and stated that there is no reason for confusion. Councilor Forgue thanked D. Brennan for her explanation.

Councilor G. Steere stated that Councilor Forgue could put this on the agenda in the future for discussion. Councilor Forgue stated that he will do that.

- B. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Solicitor has sent a letter to the owners of the orthodontist office where water is running out onto Route 44, offering a temporary solution to drain it onto the Pavilion property.
- C. Councilor G. Steere stated that an invitation was received from the Harmony Fire Department for their awards night on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Councilor Forgue stated that he will attend the event.
- D. Councilor G. Steere stated that a letter was received from RI DEM Emergency Management Agency stating that emergency action plans must be developed and updated for all of the dams in the Town. Councilor Henry asked if we face fines if we are not in compliance. Gerald Mosca, EMA Director, explained that dam

maintenance is not too expensive, but dam repair is. G. Mosca spoke regarding Emergency Action Plans, stating that they are a plan of what to do if a dam fails. G. Mosca stated that it is fairly inexpensive to do, but the problem is that most dams in Gloucester are private, such as the one at Camp Aldersgate. G. Mosca spoke about the different types of dam failure. Councilor Henry noted that the letter indicates that several of our dams are listed as high hazard. G. Mosca commented that the classifications are confusing. G. Mosca stated that as far as he knows, there is no penalty for not having the plan, however it is mandatory and DEM is pushing to “give it teeth”.

Councilor G. Steere noted that there are 15 on the list and the only three (3) that are completed are owned by RI DEM and the remainder are privately owned. G. Mosca stated that he can contact the owners and give them a template so they can get it completed. Councilor G. Steere asked if low hazard dams are supposed to have plans also. G. Mosca replied technically, they are all supposed to have one, but if we get the higher hazard ones he thinks that DEM will be satisfied. Councilor G. Steere stated that it sounds like the Town is expected to coordinate this. G. Mosca replied that we are supposed to assist the owners of the dams.

There was discussion concerning grants that will be available for dam repair. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Land Trust is having some testing done at Hawkins Pond and noted that it will be a significant job to repair the dam. Russell Gross, Land Trust member, spoke from his seat and stressed it is a very expensive project to repair a dam. Councilor G. Steere stated that Hawkins would be a mitigation project because the dam is 20 or 30 feet above several houses downstream and a catastrophic failure would cause some damage. G. Mosca stated that we could apply for it, although it doesn't mean we would get it.

- C. Councilor G. Steere stated that we received the contract from Vision Government Solutions for the complete reappraisal that will be done this coming year. Councilor Henry asked if a property owner has the right to deny somebody from Vision on their property and what would be the consequences. The response was that Vision will make an assumption and the property owner will be taxed accordingly.

#### XI. Department Head Reports/Discussion

- A. Karen Scott, Town Planner, stated that legislation has been introduced addressing qualifying low-income housing, assessment and taxation. K. Scott stated that the current state law is that for subsidized rental housing, the tax rate is 8% of the previous year's rent rolls. K. Scott stated that bills were introduced to bring that up to 10% or 12%. K. Scott asked the Council if she could reach out to our delegation to point these bills out to them and let them know we are interested in supporting them. Councilor G. Steere commented that he feels that 10% is not enough; it should be the assessed value like everyone else in town, but it is better than 8%. There was Council consensus for the Planner to send our support.
- B. Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police, spoke regarding a part time dispatcher position, stating that he will continue the ad until April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Chief DelPrete stated that only

a couple of applications were received but he will begin interviews next week because we need to get somebody as we are way behind. Councilor Reichert asked Chief DelPrete if he finds applications dropping for police officer candidates. Chief DelPrete replied in the affirmative and noted that it is statewide.

- C. Diane Brennan, Finance Director, stated that our contract with Direct Energy ends in December and noted that a number of people have offered alternatives for that. D. Brennan stated that she is seeking direction from the Council. Councilor G. Steere asked if we have heard back from the gentleman who met with him and Councilor Forgue. D. Brennan replied that he has asked to be on the agenda to speak to the Council. D. Brennan noted that others have been interested and she asked the Council if they want to hear from all of them. Councilor G. Steere asked if they have written proposals from which the Council could choose two (2) or three (3). Councilor Forgue stated that Power Source handles many towns and if the other companies can match Power Source with the same rhetoric, that is the only way we can evaluate it. D. Brennan stated that the League has spent a lot of time providing information for us. Councilor Reichert stated that we may be able to put it out to bid because the companies fight for energy rems. D. Brennan asked the Council to put some thought in it to see what direction they want to take. D. Brennan stated that the contract expires in December, but the evaluation will take some time.

## XII. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

- A. Councilor G. Steere stated that he received a call from the chair of the Parade Committee reporting that there has been a bid extension offered on the fireworks. Councilor G. Steere stated that we probably have to wait until the budget passes to approve the extension.

## XIII. Open Forum

- A. Councilor Henry stated that the Council has a Budget Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> and asked where and at what time it will be held. Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, replied that it will be at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.
- B. Dina Card, of Chestnut Hill Road, inquired about starting a farmer's market in Gloucester. D. Card stated that she and her daughter make goat milk soap to sell at farmer's markets and small stores, such as Lightning Ridge Farm. D. Card asked how to go about starting a farmer's market at the Pavilion. Councilor G. Steere stated that we have tried to have farmer's markets at Town Hall several times, but unfortunately they were not successful. D. Card stated that there may be more interest at the Pavilion because it is covered.

Councilor Henry stated that last year, she thought it would be great if our Pavilion could be used for a farmer's market and she spoke with the person who runs the one in Burrillville to pick a night where we would not be in competition with them. Councilor Henry stated that she met with local farmers three (3) times to discuss the matter. Councilor Henry stated she quickly learned that it is a complicated business with many rules and regulations, so she decided to step back. Councilor Henry stated

that she told the farmers that if one of them wanted to become the spearhead and manage a farmer's market at the Pavilion, they could bring a plan to the Council.

D. Card stated that her thought was for the vendors to be Gloucester residents and to open it up to anyone who wants to do it. Councilor Forgue stated that he has been in business for a long time and most things start small and blossom into something bigger, but somebody has to start it. Councilor Forgue stated his opinion that it is a great idea. Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, stated that she did a farmer's market several years ago, advertised and came every Saturday morning, giving up her time. J. Fecteau stated that it was just for Gloucester residents and she got a lot of grief from the organizers in Burrillville for not allowing their vendors. J. Fecteau stated that after several weeks, the farmer's market dwindled down until she stopped having it. Councilor Forgue asked what would be wrong with having vendors from other towns. J. Fecteau replied that she was giving her time and just wanted our people to make a few dollars on their extra produce.

Councilor G. Steere asked what is to stop Dina and her daughter from setting up at the Pavilion to sell their products on their own. J. Fecteau stated that we would have to check what we have in place for the rules of the Pavilion, but it may not allow for commercial sales. J. Fecteau noted that if they are not a "commercial business", it may not count, but we need to look at that. Councilor Forgue again stated that he thinks it is a great idea. Councilor Henry stated that the Council would have to give an exemption for the use of the Pavilion to some of the rules about retail sales. Councilor Henry stated that if other farmers see D. Card there, they may join her with their products. Councilor G. Steere stated that this may be the best way for it to start. Councilor G. Steere noted that his daughter participates in farmer's markets in other communities and it is very regimented. Councilor G. Steere stated that we as a town are not looking to get involved in running it.

Councilor Henry suggested that D. Card get in touch with Bob Shields, Recreation Director, because he oversees the use of the Pavilion. D. Card replied that she has tried to contact him for six (6) months, but he has never responded. Councilor Henry stated that she will pass on the information to him.

D. Card referred to the Burrillville farmer's market and stated that they only allow one of each type of vendor; there is no competition allowed. J. Fecteau noted that she did not have any rules; you only had to be a Gloucester resident.

Councilor G. Steere stated that he thinks the Council would be willing to exempt D. Card from one of the rules as we have for the Scarecrow Festival. Councilor G. Steere stated that it would have to be put on an agenda through a Council member. Councilor Forgue stated that he would be happy to do that. J. Fecteau advised D. Card to put a plan in writing and bring it to her on Monday and she would help her bring it forward for consideration.

#### XIV. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to ADJOURN at 9:04 p.m.; seconded by Councilor Henry.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED